

The Scotsman – 26.08.09

MUSIC
EUROPEAN UNION
BAROQUE ORCHESTRA
USHER HALL
★★★★★

WHAT an extraordinary sight. You don't normally associate massed ranks of strings with period instrument orchestras, but the European Youth Baroque Orchestra are an exception. No skimping here.

Instead, for this well-balanced programme of concerto grosso repertoire by Corelli, Muffat and Geminiani, the Usher Hall stage (unfortunately not the auditorium) was packed with this swaying team of college-age enthusiasts.

Behind the lead concertino group (including leader and director Chiara Banchini), and a jangling brace of harpsichords, the real meat of the ensemble stood in ordered rows, displaying unanimous movement and style, like some Suzuki violin session transported back to Baroque Rome.

The real benefit in sporting such luxury in numbers – 60 players in all – was that, for once, early music performance actually worked in the enormity of the Usher Hall.

If we learnt anything, it was appreciating the subtle stylistic differences that distinguish the music of Corelli and Muffat.

KENNETH WALTON